

College of Business Book Review by Kyuho Lee, Ph.D.

Title: "Satisfied Customers Tell Three Friends, Angry Customers Tell 3,000"

Author: Pete Blackshaw

Publisher: Doubleday

Length: 193 pages

Price: \$21.95

Reading time: 4 hours

Reading rating: 9 (1 = very difficult; 10 = very easy)

Overall rating: 4 (1 = average; 4 = outstanding)

Prior to the Internet, disgruntled customers were only able to spread negative word-of-mouth to a few their relatives and friends after they experienced poor customer service. Today, however, consumers can spread negative word-of-mouth to millions of global consumers through online forums, online reviews, video sharing sites, and personal blogs. Specifically, Internet sites such as Consumerist.com and Planetfeedback.com encourage consumers to share their product and service experiences with consumers worldwide. Pete Blackshaw's book, *Satisfied customers tell three friends, angry customers tell 3,000*, illustrates how today's consumers can share their experiences, stories, and opinions about product purchases and services with consumers around the world through consumer-generated media. Blackshaw states that "Consumer-generated media is the endless stream of comments, opinions, emotions, and personal stories about any and every company, product, service, or brand which consumers can now post online and broadcast to millions of other consumers with the click of the mouse."

According to the author, one of the major drivers motivating consumers to post their opinions, experiences, and stories on consumer-generated media is that consumers can emotionally attach to other customers. For example, when consumers get frustrated over a service company that did not respond to their complaints effectively, they tend to express their anger through the consumer-generated media in order to solicit emotional connections from other consumers. Video-sharing Internet sites, such as YouTube, and photo sharing sites, such as Flickr.com, have become popular with those consumers who want to post their experiences or opinions visually on a website. The impacts of YouTube and Flickr.com are tremendous when customers post a video showing the defects of certain brand-name products or pictures related to the quality of products since global consumers can watch the actual video or pictures from their personal computers.

As a result of these trends, the author suggests that companies should not neglect the flow of consumer opinions on consumer-generated media. More importantly, some of the information and opinions posted on consumer-generated media by angry consumers might mislead other consumers due to the inaccuracy of the information. Therefore, the author argues that it is essential that a company monitor the pattern of postings on consumer-generated media. Furthermore, Blackshaw posits that a company can only protect itself from consumer-generated media by establishing credibility with consumers. He postulates that a company needs to focus on five key drivers -- trust, authenticity,

transparency, listening, responsiveness, and affirmation -- in an effort to achieve credibility.

In summary, the growing popularity of consumer-generated media continues unabated with the rapid development of the Internet and other new technologies. So, while monitoring consumer-generated media may be yet another daunting task for managers and marketers, it is essential. "Satisfied Customers Tell Three Friends, Angry Customers Tell 3,000" is easy and enjoyable to read. Overall, this book sheds some valuable light on the notion of consumer-generated media and its impacts.

This is the opinion of Kyuho Lee, an assistant professor of hospitality management in the College of Business at Western Carolina University. His interests include restaurant franchising, international restaurant management, and service marketing. For previously reviewed books, visit [www.wcu.edu/cob](http://www.wcu.edu/cob).